


# VIZ

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Volume 2, No. 2.



## HOROBİ Nightmare Oppression Reigns in March

The wait is over! The highly anticipated premiere issue of *Horobi*, Viz's new title by Grey creator Yoshihisa Tagami, will be shipped in late March. But first, check out our update of recent news about *Horobi*.

### HOROBİ: Tagami Agrees to Draw All Covers

As anticipation steadily mounting for Viz's new release, *Horobi*, Viz received exciting news from Japan. Yoshihisa Tagami, creator of *Horobi* and *Grey*, announced his agreement to draw the illustrations for all covers of Viz's English-language version of *Horobi*.

Viz will publish the entire series in two parts: the first, in eight issues, the other in seven issues. But since only four original drawings by Tagami were available, Viz requested Tagami to create more illustrations in order to keep each cover consistent

with his unique art. *Grey* covers and posters have already proven Tagami's strong appeal for American fans.

Viz General Manager Seiji Horiuchi commented, "Of course, we are thrilled that Tagami will produce new illustrations for us. This allows us to maintain our unique policy of using only original artist-drawn cover illustrations." He added, "In fact, this feature consistently draws praise from U.S.A. fans."

*Horobi*'s Japanese publisher, Tokuma Shoten, was instrumental in Tagami's agreement. And, excited by the en-

thusiastic reception that Americans gave *Grey*, Tagami was interested in this project.

Volume four of the *Horobi* graphic novel was recently published by Tokuma Shoten in Japan. After many unexpected turns, desperation is building in the inexorable pull toward the climax. To avoid spoiling the fun for U.S. readers, suffice it to say that *Horobi* achieves an unparalleled scale of horror! The Japanese version is expected to be completed in five volumes.

# MANGA COMES TO AM

by Mark Cotta Vaz

I first met the Buddha in the pages of a Japanese comic book. It was a fortuitous encounter for an American school kid in the early 1960s but a happy one—I believe that particular comic book has led me on a path that includes Buddhist studies, voyages through the Orient, and my teaching Chinese martial arts.

The comic, *The Teachings of Buddha* (published in the late 1950s by Aoyama Shoin Co., Ltd.), was no ordinary manga, either, but one of a line of comics translated into English to introduce Japanese culture to Americans visiting the Land of the Rising Sun. The comic, a marked contrast to the Astro Boy animation and Godzilla-stomp-Tokyo flicks that back then seemed the full measure of Japanese pop culture exports, was given to me by my father, a high school history teacher who had first received it as a gift from a Japanese student of his.

These days manga doesn't take such a circuitous route to the states. Even the scores of titles being translated into English by Viz Comics, Eclipse, First, Epic, and other publishers represents but a taste of manga. Although the comic book is said to be an American invention, it's in Japan that the medium has come to full flower. Japan's manga readership is reportedly 1.5 billion comics purchased annually, compared to a mere 150 million comics in the United States. And while the American comic book industry has only recently busted out from the constraining emphasis on funny book and superhero titles, mainstream manga includes samurai sagas, sports (everything from baseball to judo), apocalyptic sci-fi fantasies, horror stories, kid adventures, sexual themes, and more and more.

The best manga feature writing as clean as a Zen poem, with visuals as stunning and full as a wood-block print. Like all great artists, manga creators take their readers where they want them to go. It's no accident that the typical manga reader spends a mere 3.75 seconds per page, according to an editor from Kodansha, a Japanese publishing conglomerate. The *Village Voice* recently noted



the manga technique of visual cues "gliding into the next faster than the speed of thought."

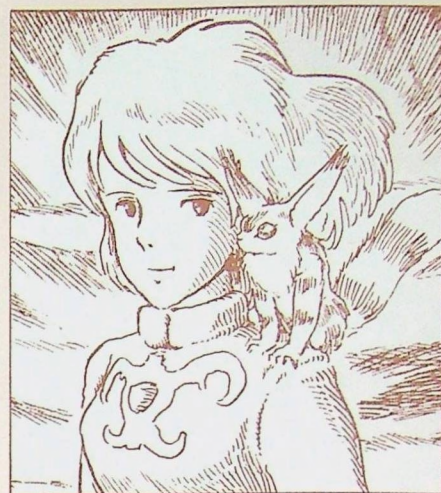
"While immersed in his comics, the reader enjoys an effortless trancelike condition," the 1987 article observed.

In a foreword to Book One of *Lone Wolf and Cub*, writer Eric Van Lustbader also notes the unique visuals integral to manga storytelling:

"It (the art of *Lone Wolf*) is faster than a speeding bullet... it is the art which carries the flow of the story like an ocean's tide."

The art is also more than the deft manipulation of visual cues. Manga art is a thing alive, with an eerie voice that is music for the mind. The sounds of a long-ago era come alive again in works like *Lone Wolf* and *Kamui*. In those epic tales we've heard the soft rain falling and the winter wind screaming, as well as the thunder of hoofbeats, the clash of swords, and the death gasp of fallen warriors. In *Akira* we've heard the powerful drone from the motorcycles of outlaw youths buzzing the dark streets of Neo-Tokyo, bound for a gaping crater, the dark heart of "the place where the bomb fell."

The production technologies used for the manga that have come to America are wonderful as well. The high quality Prestige formats generally used in manga publishing serve immediate notice that a special experience is in store. The paperback format used for many titles in Japan, and which is being adapted by Viz for collections of *Mai, the Psychic Girl*, and *Nausicaä of the Valley of*



*Wind*, could prove attractive to other U.S. publishers. And the computerized coloring effects Steve Oliff and his Olyoptics Computer Crew bring to *Akira* cuts the edge of production technology as cleanly as a samurai sword slice.

It all adds up to each title having its own fully realized vision, its own electric thrill.

Although my personal manga thrills include the battlefield pyrotechnics of *Akira* and *Grey*, as well as the ritualistic, bloody martial clashes of *Lone Wolf* and *Kamui*, it's manga's gentle heart that haunts me. Three such scenes come to me and, strangely enough, heartfelt tears fall in all.

In *Crying Freeman* there's an opening scene at a hilltop park overlooking Hong Kong where a young woman is busy at her canvas and easel, painting the view. The tranquility explodes when a gun battle erupts in the woods. One survivor emerges into the clearing and, in view of the artist, is shot down by a handsome youth. She sees him standing victorious, with death all around. She sees him standing frozen, his finger still hot on the trigger. She then sees him cry without a sound: "His tears feel like a soft, quiet rain."

In *Mai, the Psychic Girl* there's a scene where Mai receives a telephone call from her father, who had been presumed dead after a fall from a mountain path. It's a sweet picture, lovely Mai cradling the phone, listening to the precious voice, tears streaking her soft face.

## SOUND FX

### New Title By Crying Freeman Team

By now, comic fans in the U.S.A. have developed a strong appreciation of Ryoichi Ikegami, the artist of *Mai, The Psychic Girl*, and Kazuo Koike, the writer of *Lone Wolf and Cub*. Most recently, fans have noticed that

together these two make an exciting team, demonstrated in Viz's *Crying Freeman*. Last October, they unveiled their intriguing new title, *Offered*, serialized in *Weekly Big Comic: Spirits*.

This story introduces a mysterious force in a bloodline whose origin is an ancient Middle Eastern royal family. Descendants of this bloodline possess a potentially intense power, as well as

charisma. The latest descendant, a Japanese world-class middle distance runner, Yu, who is ignorant of his bloodline, is kidnapped by a mysterious woman who wants to carry his child. And she isn't the only one seeking his bloodline!

*Offered* is a promising title from one of Japan's treasured comic teams.



# ERICA

In *Lone Wolf and Cub* there's a tale wherein a ronin named Shino Sakon is hit in the chest by a sword thrown by Itto Ogami during a duel in a graveyard. This being a fight of honor, the Lone Wolf gives Sakon the victory. With his last dying words Sakon begs the Lone Wolf to abandon the assassin's road and re-join the world of the living. The Lone Wolf is moved by the pure warrior spirit and noble words of his dead opponent. As Lone Wolf picks up his child and turns his face to the wind, a tear wets his face.

"The white road between two rivers lies ahead," Ogami says as his gaze seems to pierce the bounds of time. "Will our day come at last?"

There is a mythic grace to the manga sagas that have come to the United States. The best can take the most cliché or familiar themes and characterizations and make them new again. The end-of-the-world theme in *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* reads like a mystical fairy tale, for example. And who could imagine an American comic book story in which the gun-slinging, martial arts hero is a virgin, as in *Crying Freeman*?

I still have that Buddha comic book that marked my introduction to Japanese comics. It was a window to another culture, with a message of bliss and transcendence that will always inspire me. It was also a taste of the possibilities of the comics medium.

In manga there is death and destruction—but there is also healing and compassion as well. There is magic in these manga. They are dreams, really, and in dreams anything is possible.

Mark Cotta Vaz is a writer whose most recent book, *Tales of the Dark Knight: Batman's First Fifty Years*, was published by Ballantine Books in the fall of 1989. His magazine works include an exclusive interview with the Dalai Lama and an investigation of the problems and promise of California's genetic engineering industry.

Vaz is a board of directors member of the San Francisco-based Cartoon Art Museum. Vaz also teaches Choy Li Fut kung fu and is an advanced student of the renowned Choy Li Fut and Tai Chi Grandmaster Doc-Fai Wong.

## Viz Secures Rights for 2001 NIGHTS

As reported in the last edition of Viz-In, Viz expanded its Japanese connection by adding two important comics publishers to its base of allied publishers: Futabasha and Kadokawa Shoten. The U.S. manga fan will see the first major result of this arrangement this coming summer. Through the assistance of Futabasha, publisher of this epic's original Japanese version, Viz has secured the publishing rights for the English-language version of *2001 Nights—Space Fantasy*.

As introduced in our last Viz Picks, *2001 Nights* is regarded by many as the best genuine science fiction comic in Japan. The title of this popular work pays more than a slight homage to both the medieval Arabic tales, as well as to Arthur C. Clark's modern

sci-fi classic: a combination of references that prepares the reader for an episodic and broad spectrum of storytelling.

Viz General Manager, Seiji Horiuchi, stated, "After wanting to publish *2001 Nights* for more than two years, we are extremely pleased with this resolution. Not only one of Japan's best offerings, its style and content are easily accessible to American readers. We are now planning a major promotion project for this title."

July 1990 is slated as the release date of *2001 Nights*. Though details of format and price are still under consideration, its format will be the square-bound deluxe style customary to Viz productions.

VIZ-PICKS

## GUNHED

by Kia Asamiya

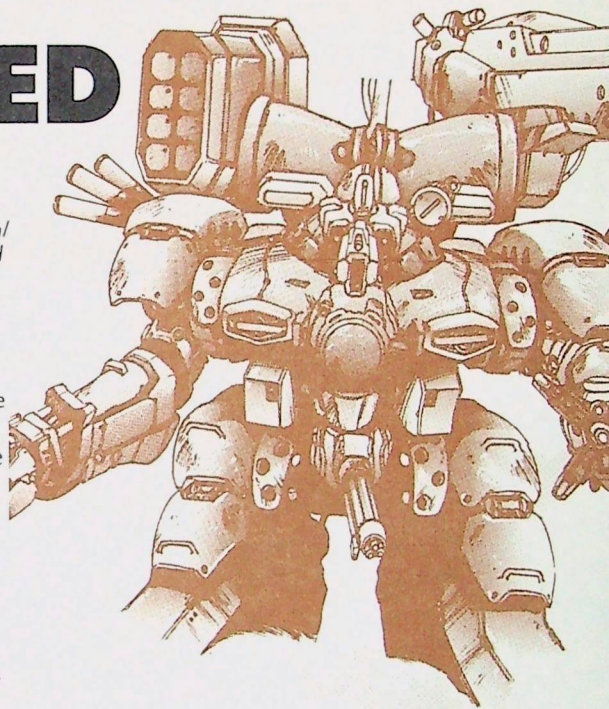
Serialized in *Newtype* (monthly animation/media magazine) 1988-89. Collected and published as a graphic novel in 1989 by Kadokawa Shoten.

*Gunhed* was first projected as a large-scale live-action science-fiction film. Two novelizations of the movie were planned; and finally, it was serialized in comic form. All of these premiered this summer as a major multi-media project.

*Gunhed's* story is the struggle between men and a machine, and between a machine which assists humanity and a machine which can only destroy.

In the 21st century, a robot manufacturing plant built on an isolated island is controlled by the world's largest super-computer. Suddenly it rebels violently against the technicians, and claims independence for the island. Even the government, armed with every robot weapon to combat the computer, fails.

Years later, a group of "bandits" seeking valuable computer parts risks raiding the island and meets



a beautiful, wounded Texas policewoman. In a chase to capture the robot that broke into a high-tech Dallas institute, she was stranded on the island. The policewoman and the bandits join forces to face the super-computer. Their only hope is to repair the government robot weapon, *Gunhed*, and employ it.

### Update: Baoh Animated Video

As reported in Viz-In #18, the animated video version of Viz's December release, Hirohiko Araki's *Baoh*, was released in Japan on November 1st. Its dynamic fight scenes were highly reviewed in recent issues of Japanese animation magazines. Special notice was given

to *Baoh's* leaping and saber-slashing of enemies. The sound track music of the video was simultaneously released in CD. For all the fans of *Baoh* and Araki, the holiday season was a bonanza!

### Poll Is Dominated By Miyazaki Characters

The December issue of Japan's leading comic fan magazine, *Comic Box*, revealed the results of its first-ever poll of best comic/animation characters. As expected, characters created by Hayo Miyazaki, the creator of Viz's *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, took the number one and

two spots. Most popular is Kiki, the main character of Miyazaki's recent animation film, *The Witch's Messenger Service*. Only slightly less popular is our *Nausicaä*. It is remarkable, as well as the measure of Miyazaki's talent, that in the fast-changing world of Japanese animation and comics, *Nausicaä* has captured and retained her popularity for nearly ten years.

## VIZ SELECT COMICS

### BAOH #6

story and art by  
Hirohiko Araki  
monthly, b&w, 48 pages  
8 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN

Violet has been captured by the Judas Group and is being tortured to reveal the secrets of her telepathic abilities even as Ikuro faces another killer—without Violet's precognitive ability to warn him! Ikuro, however, begins to realize he has some control over Baho's awesome powers. And he'll need them when he faces the horrendous threat of Walken, the ESPER WAR-RIOR! This issue also finds Ikuro bringing the battle to the Judas Group as he attempts to rescue Violet from his enemies.

**Shipping May 22**



## VIZ PREMIERE COMICS

### HOROBİ PART ONE BOOK THREE

story and art by  
Yoshihisa Tagami  
monthly, b&w, 80 pages  
8 issues  
\$3.75 USA/\$5.00 CAN

All hell breaks loose this month as more of Zen Amako's horrific nightmares leave their huge footprints in our own reality—and that's no metaphor! A 600-foot-tall monster is trashing the countryside: and the army can't stop it!

Zen and his friends discover his burgeoning telepathic ability. At the same time, we learn of a hidden organization called Satori and their unknown plans for espers like Zen.

This issue, see more of the puzzle pieces as the relationship between Sakatayama, Zen Amako, and the Sacred Animal Mirror begins to come together!

**Shipping May 22**



Viz Premiere Comics are intended for mature readers and will sometimes contain adult situations and strong language.

## VIZ GRAPHIC NOVELS

### LUM GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL. 2

story and art by  
Rumiko Takahashi  
212 pages  
\$14.95 USA/\$19.95 CAN

More laughs than before! Funnier the second time around! Don't miss this second volume of hilarity with a complete new story titled "Ain't He Sweet!"

**Shipping May 22**



## VIZ-IN MAGAZINE

\$4.00 per bundle of 100

All the news concerning manga and animation that's fit to print can be found right here in Viz-In! Each issue features articles by the top talents in comic books today, in-depth looks at your favorite manga titles, and the latest animation news from Japan. Stay informed!

**Shipping May 15**

**VIZ-IN Volume 2, Number 2**  
Executive Editor/Seiji Horibuchi  
Editors/John Togashi & Satoru Fujii  
Design & Layout/Hidemi Sahara

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## VIZ SELECT COMICS

### COBRA #4

story and art by  
Buichi Terasawa  
monthly, b&w, 48 pages  
12 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN

Cobra has managed to escape from Schultz's prison with Cathy and the second part of the map to Nelson's Treasure, only to find himself immediately being stalked by another beautiful killer on the outside. Only Cobra's wits alone can save him from the high-powered laser-weapon of his attacker. Also, wait till Cobra sees who his would-be assassin is!

Meanwhile, Tarbeige the Magician is putting the pressure on Doug the Informant for the location of Cobra's secret hideout. Will Cobra lose one of his greatest secrets? Or will Doug's growing respect for Cobra gain him an unexpected ally? Read this issue and find out!

**Shipping May 29**



## VIZ PREMIERE COMICS

### CRYING FREEMAN #8

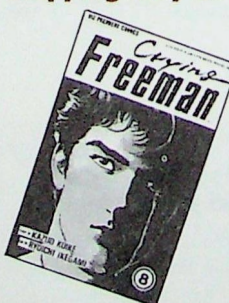
story by Kazuo Koike  
art by Ryoichi Ikegami  
monthly, b&w, 64 pages  
8 issues  
\$3.50 USA/\$4.00 CAN

Emu and Mr. Yo are reunited again in the sylvan beauty of West Izu while Yo's enemies, the Hakushin Society, close in on them.

As Emu faces the yakuza killers alone and unarmed, Yo prepares for his final face-off against his implacable foes, Kimie and Nitta.

Will Yo and Emu be able to escape death and the shadow of their past to find their own freedom? Read this amazing final issue and discover the answers for yourself.

**Shipping May 29**



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## VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL BACKLIST

Viz Graphic Novels have beautiful color dust jackets, over 250 pages and have sold so many copies you know they're quality titles to add to your library.



Available once more to its demanding public, the collected adventures of an innocent esper girl have been reprinted. If you missed any of the original American 28-issue series and can't find any of those hard-to-get back issues, here's another chance to own them all in four beautiful dust-jacketed volumes.

- MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL VOL. 1 \$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN
- MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL VOL. 2 \$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN
- MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL VOL. 3 \$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN
- MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL VOL. 4 \$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN



- GREY GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL. 1 \$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN
- GREY GRAPHIC NOVEL VOL. 2 \$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN

Revisit the stark, terrible future of Grey as he battles his way across the badlands. He fights against dangerous men, dangerous machines, and the dangerous final fate of mankind. Available in two handsome volumes, each packed with over 290 pages of action and thrills!